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DEPT FOR EUR/ERA, EUR/NCE

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TAGS: PREL PGOV PHUM SI

SUBJECT: SLOVENIA IN ADVANCE OF THE NOVEMBER 13-14 FOREIGN
MINISTERS MEETING (GAERC)

REF: SECSTATE 183545

Classified By: COM Thomas B. Robertson for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (U) Polecon Chief met on 8 November with Slovenian MFA EU
Correspondent Aljaz Arih to discuss reftel points.

¶2. (C) Western Balkans: Arih agreed with the US view that
Serbian elections had little to do with final status
discussions/decisions on Kosovo. He thought a slight delay
might be necessary, but if Serbian elections slipped too far
into 2007, Slovenia would not support a significant delay in
SE Ahtisaari's efforts. In last month's GAERC, Arih said FM
Rupel had strongly urged the EU to be more "flexible" with
Serbia, meaning it should offer Serbia something
"substantial" such as visa facilitation for students and
business people as a signal that there is a European future
for Serbia. He said he thought this idea might be further
discussed on 13 November, but because of several members'
strong objections, stability and association talks would not
re-open absent Serbia's clear cooperation with ICTY. Arih
also asked where the US thought Russia would ultimately come
down on Kosovo, saying he found recent messages from Russia
confusing.

¶3. (C) Russia: Arih thought the GAERC would be focused on
what mandate to give the European Commission vis a vis Russia
and the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement and the
upcoming November 24 EU-Russia Summit. Several members were
still balking at handing over authority to negotiate on
energy, and others were trying to include a position that
Russia should fully implement its Istanbul Commitments (to
withdraw Russian troops from non-Russian territory).

¶4. (C) Israel: The GOS fully supports the work of the
Quartet. Arih said that support of the Karni initiative was
under discussion but no decision had yet been made. He also
said that the EU planned to extend the successful Rafah
mission. Arih expressed concern over recent Israeli forces
action in Gaza and said Israel should be more restrained and
use "proportional force" to address its security concerns. A
priority of the GOS remains the release of Israeli Corporal
Shalit.

¶5. (C) Lebanon: Echoing our concern over Syrian influence
in Lebanon, Arih said the GOS agreed with our view that the
US and EU needed to work in concert to support the Siniora
government. While UNIFIL is up to full force, Arih said
Slovenia's contribution of troops was being held up by
negotiations with the EU partner who would be supporting the
Slovenian troops on the ground. He said he expected the
GAERC to devote time to the discussion of financial support
and reconstruction for Lebanon, and that it was the hope of
the GOS that more financial support would be provided.

¶6. (SBU) Human Rights: Arih took on board our points on Uzbekistan an Cuba as well as Iran.

¶7. (C) Iran: While not responding directly to the call for swift action on sanctions for Iran, Arih expressed interest in USG views of the Russian proposal on a center for the production of nuclear material and further detail on Russian and Chinese "attempts to weaken current draft and delay progress." Poloff agreed to seek greater detail on these points.

ROBERTSON